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AUTHOR Latham, Glenn
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ABSTRACT

Presented is the report of a study -- involving 1150 special education teachers and 25 instructional materials centers (IMCs) and learning resource centers (LRCs) -- to investigate the needs for, uses of, and priorities for instructional materials for teaching handicapped children. Listed are three methods of data collection: the use of materials evaluation cards, teacher interviews, and on-site evaluations of IMCs and LRCs. Results are outlined under the following seven areas: the extent to which teachers of the handicapped use the instructional materials available to them via special education IMCs and LRCs; the materials, by name, which are most frequently used by teachers of the handicapped; the extent of use of instructional materials by subject area; the extent of use of instructional materials by handicapping condition; the ways teachers regard the materials available at the IMCs/LRCs; factors which influence teachers' use of IMC/LRC materials; and factors which relate to and/or influence the purchase of instructional materials. Appendixes (which make up more than half of the document) include a research paper on an alternative method of measuring and reporting teachers' responses to the instructional materials they use; a sample questionnaire for obtaining client perceptions of LRC services; and a blank table for entering information on the availability, accessibility, use, and condition of IMC/LRC items. (SB)

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Theoretical Paper No. 59

TEACHER USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO SPECIAL EDUCATION IMC/LRC COLLECTIONS

by

Glenn Latham

Report from the Specialized Office Three Project on
Education for the Handicapped

Jenny R. Armstrong
Associate Scientist

Richard A. Rossmiller
Principal Investigator

Wisconsin Research and Development
Center for Cognitive Learning
The University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

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ABSTRACT

A large scale, national instructional materials support program for handicapped children was initiated in 1964 by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and maintained for a period of ten years. This program which was comprised of regional, state, and local instructional materials centers provided a beginning base of knowledge on the needs for, uses of, and priorities for instructional materials for use in teaching handicapped children. This paper reviews the knowledge base and provides insight and direction to future work in the area of materials evaluation and selection for handicapped children.

I

INTRODUCTION

Since 1964, via the nationwide network of special education instructional materials centers (IMCs) and learning resource centers (LRCs), a considerable effort has been made to provide teachers of the handicapped with instructional materials and aids to assist them in their role. This effort has seemingly been based on the premise that there is a direct relationship between the quality of instruction a child receives and the quality of support (including instructional materials) that the teacher receives. Unfortunately, the accuracy of this premise has never been well tested and the myriad variables that affect this premise have never been well identified, nor has their impact on the education of handicapped children been well documented.

This study, though limited in scope, has addressed several questions related to teacher use of instructional materials, and other matters related to special education learning resource centers as they support the instructional efforts of teachers of the handicapped. Those questions are:

1. To what extent do teachers of the handicapped use the instructional materials made available to them via special education IMCs/LRCs?
2. What materials, by name, are most frequently used by teachers of the handicapped?
3. What is the extent of use of instructional materials by subject area?
4. What is the extent of use of instructional materials by handicapping condition? What materials appear to be most appropriate for varying handicapping conditions?
5. How do teachers regard the materials available to them at the IMCs/LRCs?
6. What factors influence teachers' use of IMC/LRC materials?
7. What factors relate to and/or influence the purchase of instructional materials?

II

METHOD

Three major efforts have been made to gather data on these questions:

1. Measurement of teacher responses to the instructional materials they used. Between 1400 and 1500 responses, from approximately 500 teachers of the handicapped, were gathered using the SEIMC Materials Use Response Card (see Appendix A).
2. Teacher interviews. Approximately 650 teachers of the handicapped were interviewed (either in person or by phone) and, among other questions, were asked to identify those materials and services of the IMCs and LRCs that they found to be most valuable. (See Appendix B. This instrument has changed in format over the years, but the content has remained essentially the same).
3. On-site evaluations of IMCs/LRCs. Twenty-five IMC/LRC collections were studied, on-site using the Collection Monitoring Form (see Appendix C).

The data reported below were gathered over a three and a half year period, and represent responses of teachers and special education IMCs/LRCs in Oregon, Washington, California, Idaho, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii, The United States Trust Territory of the Pacific, Guam, and American Samoa.

III

RESULTS

QUESTION 1: To what extent do teachers of the handicapped use the instructional materials made available to them via special education IMCs/LRCs?

The variety and differing adequacy of the many record keeping systems in use at the different IMCs/LRCs make it extremely difficult to identify precisely the extent to which teachers use the instructional materials available to them. Nonetheless, several "ballpark" figures have emerged and are reported here as having substantial validity and reliability.

Use by Total Collection

Generally, it seems safe to assume that 70 percent to 80 percent of the materials of any randomly selected IMC/LRC collection will either never be checked out in any given year, or will be checked out only once. A surprising number, perhaps as high as one-third, of any given collection will never have been checked out at all, or will never have been checked out over the last three years. Table 1 details the disposition of materials not in frequent use.

TABLE 1

DISPOSITION OF MATERIALS
NOT IN FREQUENT USE

Disposition of Materials	Percent*
Undesirable/unknown to patrons	25 to 30
Parts broken or missing	20 to 25
Out of date	13
Stolen or lost	12
Highly specialized	3
Percent of total collection	75 to 80%

*These percentages are approximations based on the collections studied.

Use as a Function of the Size of the Collection

There appears to be a direct relationship between the size of the collection and the extent to which the materials within that collection are used.

As shown in Figure 1, the various collections of materials were distributed into frequency distributions according to size; the smaller the collection, the larger the mean, per item use.

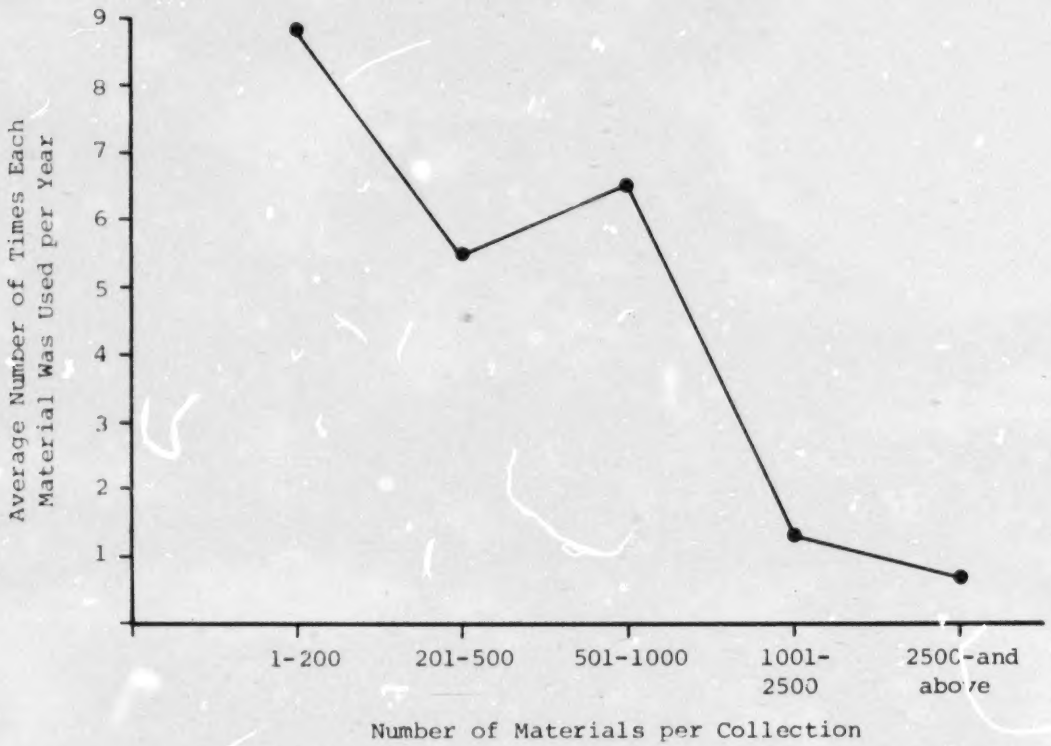

Figure 1. Annual use as a function of the size of the collection.

Upon studying Figure 1, one might logically conclude that, given a stable population of teachers, as the collection increases in size, the per-item use decreases since there are more materials from which to choose. In that regard, two considerations seem worth mentioning. First, it is unlikely that the downward trend would be as dramatic as that shown in Figure 1, and second, it is interesting to note that the number of materials, and the individual materials checked out, do not change markedly with the size of the collection. In other words, regardless of the size of the collection, the same materials are checked out, and they are checked out with nearly the same frequency (see Figure 2). The major factor affecting the frequency with which materials are checked out

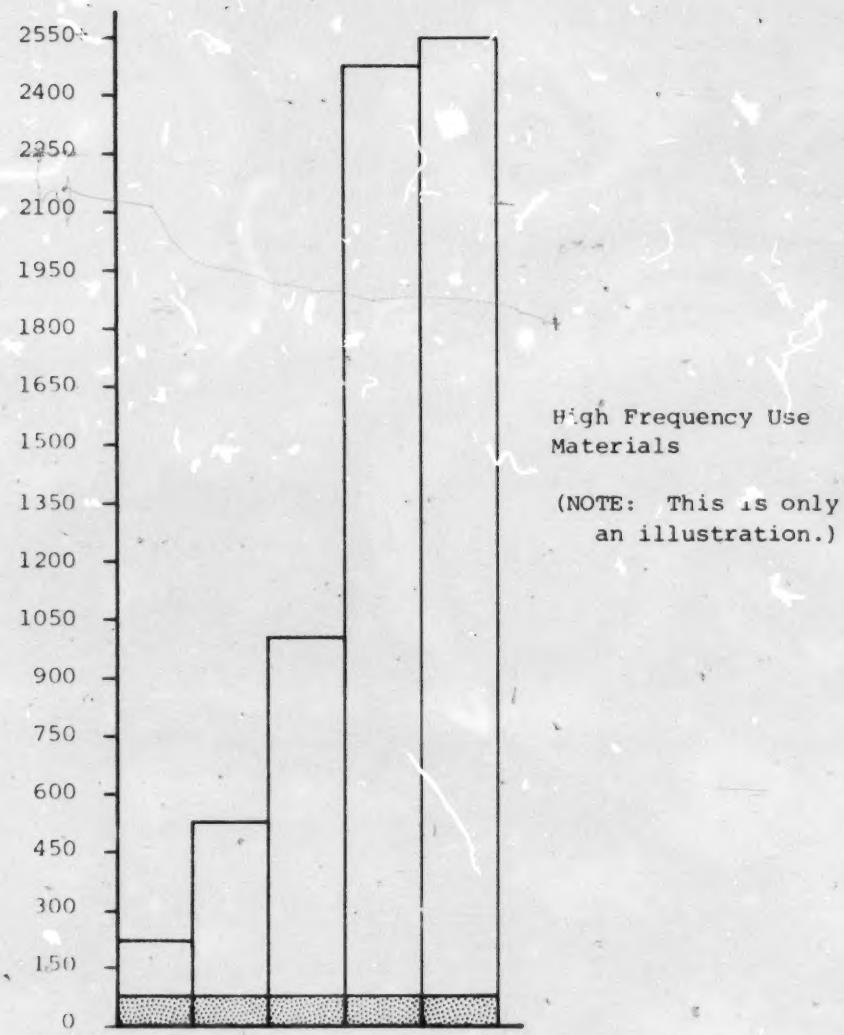

Figure 2. High frequency use materials appear to remain stable irrespective of the size of the collection.

appear to be the characteristics of the materials, rather than the number of materials available. This would indicate that the size of an instructional materials collection would be relatively unimportant so long as it contained those materials that teachers found useful.

Parenthetically, it seems appropriate to note that regardless of the size of the collection, a frequent suggestion (appeal?) of those interviewed has been that materials be purchased for which there are data (at least teacher inputs) that verify that the materials are related to the specific needs and abilities of the children.

QUESTION 2: What materials, by name, are most frequently used by teachers of the handicapped?

Though there may be some danger in identifying materials by name, investigators feel justified in doing so given the fact that a relatively small number of materials were repeatedly named by the interviewed teachers as being the most popular and highly regarded. It must be emphasized that no endorsement of any product, material, author, or publisher is intended by this action. Also, it should be noted that not every teacher and not every IMC/LRC collection reflected the findings reported below. Lastly, the vast majority of materials checked out by teachers were rated high (see Question 5) regardless of their frequency of use.[1]

Reading and Language Arts

Programs (Listed in rank order)
- DISTAR
- Science Research Associates (SRA) Basic Reading Program
- Bowmar
- Sullivan Behavioral Research Laboratories (BRL)
- Peabody Language Development Kit (PLDK)
- Ginn 100 Basic Readers
- Systems 80

Series and Skill Development Materials (Listed in rank order)
- Checkered Flag Series
- Tom Logan Series
- Palo Alto Readers
- Springboard Series
- Grademaker Mystery Series
- Target
- Dan Frontier Series, Jim Forest Series, Sports Close-ups, Cowboy Sam

[1] This list lacks specificity to the extent that in some instances materials were identified in rather broad terms. For example, "DISTAR" and "DLM" were frequently mentioned, but the teachers did not/could not always identify the specific DISTAR or DLM item being used. Further study in this area should address this matter.

Aids to Reading and Language Instruction (Listed in rank order)
- Developmental Learning Materials (DLM)
- Children's Press Materials
- Bell and Howell Language Master

Format

Teachers frequently indicated the need to use games and puzzles to assist in reading and language instruction and the need for high interest, low vocabulary reading materials (for girls as well as boys!).

Arithmetic

DISTAR was the most frequently cited arithmetic program mentioned by name. Other arithmetic programs were mentioned only infrequently.

DLM materials were cited most often as aids to arithmetic instruction, and, as with reading, games and puzzles were frequently mentioned as being useful and effective.

Science

The Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) Me Now kit was the only repeatedly mentioned science instruction material.

Perceptual-Motor Materials

The Frostig materials were most often mentioned by name, with the DLM materials being next.

Materials Commonly Mentioned in the Various Collections

The materials listed below, though not high frequency items in materials collections generally, were identified by teachers from numerous centers as being valuable:

Reading and Language (Listed in random order)
- Stanwix House
- Follett
- Continental Press
- McMillan Language Skill Series
- Lift-Off Series
- Laidlaw Language Series
- Program Builder
- Phonics We Use
- Montessori Materials
- Edmark Reading
- Educational Developmental Laboratories (EDL) Controlled Readers
- Functional Basic Reading Series

Reader's Digest Readers
Scott Foresman Readers
Dolch Materials
Pace Setters for Reading

Arithmetic (Listed in random order)
Money Makes Sense
Continental Press Materials
Montessori Materials

QUESTION 3: What is the extent of use of instructional materials by subject area?

Here, again, precise figures are impossible to cite. The figures in Table 2 are approximations, but the evidence suggests that they are generally accurate and account for the variations that exist from center to center.

TABLE 2

EXTENT OF USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
BY SUBJECT AREA

Subject Matter Area	Extent of Use by Percent
Reading and Language	55 to 65
Arithmetic	15 to 20
Social Studies	10 to 15
Science	5
All Others	5
Percent of total collection	90 to 110

QUESTION 4: What is the extent of use of instructional materials by handicapping condition? What materials appear to be most appropriate for varying handicapping conditions?

Except for the visually and auditorily impaired, there does not appear to be any significant (or even casual) relationship between a given instructional material and a given handicapping condition. What "works well" with a child classified as Learning Disabled appears to "work" equally well with a child classified as EMR (educable, mentally retarded). A child's handicap, therefore, (with the exception cited above) appears to have no bearing whatever on the selection of instructional materials to be used in teaching that child. Selecting appropriate instructional materials seems to be primarily a matter of supporting instructional efforts in the subject matter areas rather than matching materials to unique characteristics. Given the work of Armstrong (1975) and Hirsch and Armstrong (1975), this area of concern appears to require substantially more attention.

QUESTION 5: How do teachers regard the materials available to them at the IMCs/LRCs?

In describing the instructional materials that they had borrowed from the IMCs/LRCs, 90.7 percent of the teachers recorded positive responses, and 9.3 percent recorded negative responses.

When asked if they would use the material again, 87.8 percent said they would, and 12.2 percent said they would not. When asked if the materials they had borrowed were as readily available to them through sources other than the IMCs/LRCs, 92.5 percent of the teachers said no, and 7.5 percent said yes.

These responses suggest that IMC/LRC materials are generally seen by teachers as valuable, and that without the IMCs/LRCs, the materials would be less readily available for use in the classrooms of the handicapped.

QUESTION 6: What factors influence teachers' use of IMC/LRC materials?

Although there are undoubtedly others, the factors cited below appear to be among the most important in influencing teachers' use of IMC/LRC collections:

1. Proximity. It is generally the case that the closer the center is to the teachers, the more the materials will be used. (Nevertheless, it is not impossible to find situations where teachers working close to an IMC/LRC--even in the same building--seldom, if ever, avail themselves of the materials.) Figure 3 illustrates the effect of proximity on the utilization of a special education instructional materials collection. Although these data are regional in scope, they appear to be representative of special education collections generally, except in those situations where a stable materials delivery system is available.
2. Materials delivery. In those situations where materials are delivered to the teachers, frequency of use typically increases and proximity to the collection is less influential. The most successful delivery systems appear to be these (listed in order of priority): (1) IMC/LRC staff. In this situation, materials are personally delivered to the teachers by members of the IMC/LRC staff. (2) District Courier. School districts often have a delivery service that visits the schools on a regularly scheduled basis, usually at least weekly. (3) Mail. Though this service is available to everyone, costs often are prohibitive.
3. IMC/LRC Staff. Materials are more likely to be used in situations where knowledgeable center staff are available to help teachers locate and select materials, and to demonstrate their use.
4. Knowledge of the collection. It is generally the case that the more aware teachers are of the materials available to them, the more likely they will be to avail themselves of those materials.

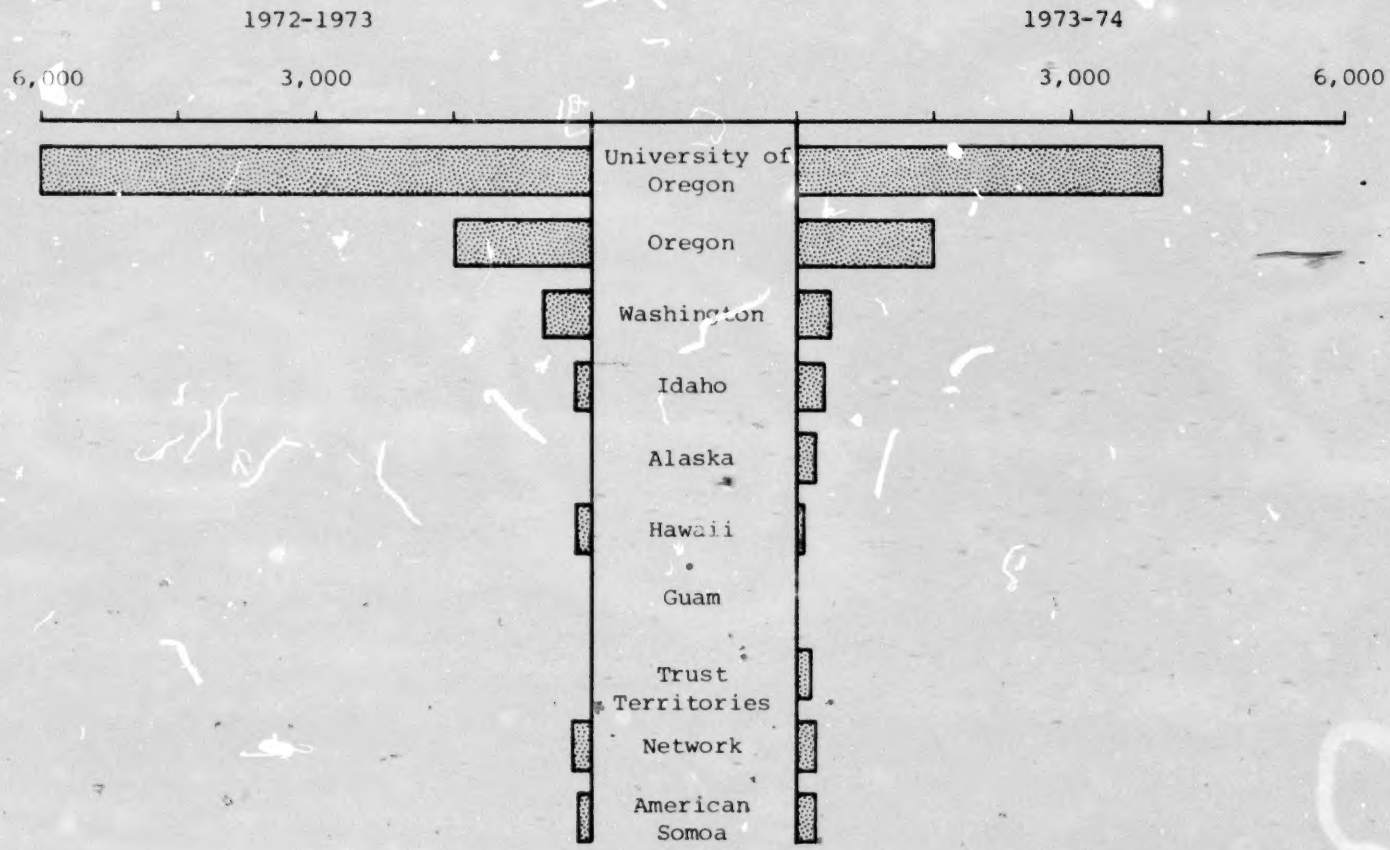

Figure 3. Northwest Special Education Instructional Materials Center materials collection utilization by areas served (the SEIMC was housed on the campus of the University of Oregon)

5. Knowledge of the individual materials. The rate of materials checkout appears to be a reflection of how familiar the teachers are with the materials (i.e., how to use them, for what instruction purpose to use them, etc.).
6. Manner by which materials are identified for inclusion in the collection. Materials that are acquired arbitrarily by IMC/LRC personnel ("catalog buying") appear to get less use than materials that are suggested for purchase by those who will be using them. There is ample evidence to suggest that it is wise to conduct a materials needs/perceived needs assessment, and then purchase materials accordingly. (Nevertheless, the extent to which almost any material is used is related to the extent to which teachers are made aware of its availability and how to use it.)

7. Promotional efforts. It may be unfortunate, but teachers appear to "consume" instructional materials in much the same way that they consume any other goods or services (i.e., How does it look? How does it make me look? Who has recommended it? etc.). Consequently, center personnel who "push" their materials tend to find their materials being used more frequently.
8. Access to the IMC/LRC. Collections that are difficult to reach because of stairways, lack of parking, rough walking surfaces, etc., tend to be used less than those with easier access.
9. IMC/LRC facilities. Materials tend to get used more frequently when they are housed in facilities that have adequate shelving, browsing room, preview space, lighting, and temperature control.
10. Availability and condition of materials. Teachers tend to lose interest in using IMC/LRC materials if they repeatedly have trouble locating/acquiring the materials they want, or, once located/acquired, find the material to be unusable due to damage or missing parts.

QUESTION 7: What factors relate to and/or influence the purchase of instructional materials?

Several factors emerged which appear to relate to and/or influence the purchase of instructional materials for an IMC/LRC collection. Several were obvious, such as the availability of funds, instruction needs, and awareness of IMC/LRC staff of materials available for purchase. A less obvious factor, however, is detailed in Figure 4, the per-item cost of instructional materials as a function of the size of the collection. Although this is an area that needs further study, there is reason to believe that the per-item costs for small collections (which are usually the newer collections) are substantially greater than the per-item costs for larger collections (which usually have been in existence for some time).

No definitive data have emerged to explain the costs-per-item differentials as a function of the size and age of collections. However, a perusal of several acquisition records revealed that in many cases, materials collections apparently originated as a result of the sudden availability of a substantial amount of money, making it possible to purchase more expensive materials at the outset. This appeared to be followed by the purchase of less expensive support/enrichment/variety materials. In time, however, as materials began to experience "wear and tear," replacement costs (and probably inflation) tended to drive up the per-item costs. It is hoped that this analysis, though admittedly simplistic, may give some direction to further study in this area.

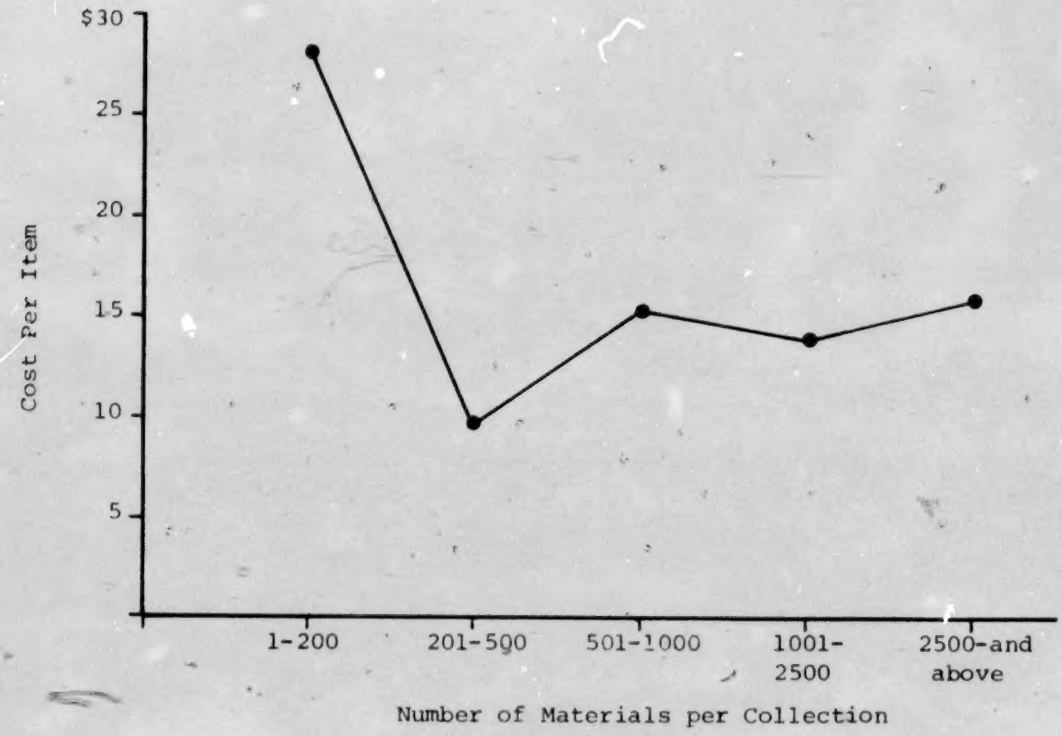

Figure 4. Per-item cost of instructional materials as a function of the size of the collection.

IV

CONCLUSION

Teacher use of instructional materials is a subject that is in need of considerable study. Certainly, frequency of use is not an exclusively viable measure of the appropriate use of instructional materials. It is possible that day in and day out, great numbers of instructional materials are poorly and inappropriately used with handicapped as well as "regular" students.

In pursuit of more functional knowledge, this investigator suggests that studies be conducted that are addressed to identifying and then matching appropriate instructional materials to specific learner needs. Such knowledge, in the hands of trained and competent teachers, would certainly bear a greater impact on the education of handicapped children than would the simple availability of large numbers of instructional materials brightly packaged and neatly shelved.

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APPENDIX A

MEASURING TEACHER RESPONSES TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

RESEARCH PAPER #6

Exceptional Child Center
Utah State University
Logan Utah 84322
Phone: 801-752-4100
Ext.: 7758

Measuring Teacher Responses To Instructional Materials

Glenn Latham, Ed. D.

Trying to evaluate instructional materials as "good" or "bad", "effective" or "ineffective" for instructional purposes is proposed to be an impractical effort given existing evaluation techniques.

As an alternative, measuring and reporting teachers' responses to the instructional materials they use is proposed. Suggested procedures and instrumentation to do so are described.

MEASURING TEACHER RESPONSES TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The evaluation of instructional materials has been a persisting concern to all levels of public school education. A review of the literature on the subject leads one to believe that everyone is talking about it, nearly everyone is doing something about it, but no one seems to be getting very far at it. This writing, hopefully, will shed some light on at least one aspect of the problem--measuring teacher reactions to instructional materials--and help point the way to more productive research.

The Problem

Efforts to involve teachers in the evaluation of instructional materials have focused, for the most part, on getting teachers to record their reactions to a given material on some type of "materials evaluation" form. Typically, getting useful data via this means has been fraught with two prevailing problems: (1) designing an instrument that measures the worth of a given material for instructional purposes, and (2) getting users of instructional materials to adequately complete and return the evaluation instrument so that the data can be analyzed.

A careful review of over 30 instruments used throughout the country has revealed a variety of approaches to assessing the value of instructional materials for educational purposes. Although all the instruments are common in a number of ways, one obvious commonality is that they do not measure the educational value of an instructional material. In other words, in no way can the data from such instruments be interpreted to identify a given instructional material as "good" or "poor", "effective" or "ineffective," as an aid to learning. What they appear to measure is a teacher's perceptions of the value or worth of instructional materials as aids to learning. This finding has prompted a suspicious view toward the accuracy of the term "materials evaluation." A more accurate term,

though somewhat clumsy, is user reaction. Indeed, we can, and do, measure user reactions and we are able to do so with some degree of sophistication. The day-to-day involvement of teachers, however, in actually determining the value of instructional materials (i.e., "good," "bad," "effective," "ineffective") does not appear to be a reality at present, though the need for such is overwhelming.

Though it is possible to measure user reaction to instructional materials, the critical matter of getting teachers to record their reactions on an "evaluation" instrument, and to get that completed instrument into the hands of those seeking the data, is a problem of perplexing and frustrating proportions. Typically, teachers could not care less about the concerns for data of those collecting "the stuff." As one teacher so "disrespectfully" noted on an uncompleted form, "I am so damned tired of filling out these rotten, irrelevant forms that I'd rather go without the use of the material than be faced with another one of these!" In a word, teachers see no pay-off for the time and energy spent in providing such data. Such a circumstance has led teachers to view as punishing the task of formally responding regarding their experiences with instructional materials.

The Study

To investigate the dimensions of these two problems (designing an instrument that measures the worth of a given material for instructional purposes, and getting users of instructional materials to adequately complete and return the evaluation instrument), a two-part study was conducted. First, an item analysis was completed on over 30 "evaluation" instruments which had been collected from throughout the nation. It was hoped that such an analysis would reveal the extent to which the instruments in question really did measure the instructional value of instructional materials.

The second part of the study focused on teacher reactions to the forms. Teachers were selected at random and interviewed regarding their feelings about filling out the materials evaluation forms. They were asked, very simply, "How do you feel about completing such materials evaluation forms as these (they were shown typical forms) on materials you have used with your students?"

Item Analysis

"Evaluation" items tended to fall into two broad categories--items seeking topographical data, such as the type of students with whom the material is being used, age of students, subject being taught, etc., and items seeking teachers' reactions to the materials, such as 'How relevant was the material for your instructional needs?" "Would you use the material again?," etc. The "reaction" items tended also to be dichotomous, seeking teachers' responses to the practical aspects of the material, such as durability, cost and ease of use, and teacher responses to the instructional value of the materials, such as, "Is the material well sequenced?," "Does it allow for appropriate practice?, "Is the use of the material reinforcing to the children?," etc. The usual classification of items contained in typical "materials evaluation" forms is shown in Table 1. As noted earlier, the results of this analysis raised grave doubts about the evaluative capacity of such instruments to identify a given instructional material as "good" or "bad," "effective" or "ineffective", for instructional purposes. The overwhelming trends were toward the gathering of information about the instructional setting and teachers' subjective reactions to the materials.

Teacher Interviews

Teacher responses to questions related to their feelings about "materials evaluation" instruments stabilized quickly. It was amazing how many different ways teachers could indicate that they did not like

Table 1

CLASSIFICATION OF ITEMS CONTAINED IN TYPICAL MATERIALS EVALUATION FORMS: AN ILLUSTRATION

Topographical	Teacher Reaction	
	Practical Value	Instructional Value
Type of Students EMR TMR	Durability	Sequenced
Age of Students	Cost	Reinforcing
Grade Level	Ease of Use	Reliable
Subject Matter		

Table 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS OF MOST IMPORTANCE TO TEACHERS

Practical Characteristics	Instructional Characteristics
1. Effective	1. Contains instructional objectives
2. Motivating to students	2. Tasks are sequenced
3. Cost	3. Reinforcing to students
4. Adaptable	4. Allows for immediate feedback
5. Durable	5. Has transfer value
6. Interesting to students	6. Content is valid
7. Availability	7. Allows for appropriate practice
8. Relevant	8. Reliable
9. Understandable	9. Has a S-R Format
10. Easy to use	10. Disability related
11. Allows for student-teacher interaction	11. Allows for ongoing evaluation
12. Contains a teacher's manual	12. Provides a multi-sensory approach to instruction

something. An initial intent of this part of the study was to interview 25 teachers, but after 12 interviews, it was concluded by the author that to pursue the matter further was a waste of valuable time, energy, and resources. (I am aware of how unscientific this is, but a person can take just so much abuse.) In a word, teachers dislike filling out such forms. The following are representative of teachers' feelings: "They take too long." "I seldom know what to write." "They don't make sense." "I just refuse to fill out any more of those things." "It's a bother. I have more important things to do." "I fill those out and that's the end of it. I never get any information back to do me any good." "I suppose that this information is important to some people, but it sure isn't to me." With feelings such as these, it is no wonder that so few teachers will trouble themselves to complete and return the forms.

The fact that so many teachers regarded the instruments as irrelevant and of no value to them prompted the author to examine the extent to which items in the instruments were consistent with what teachers regarded as important. To measure this, 37 teachers were asked to list those things that they would like to know about instructional materials, assuming that it was possible to get such data. Their responses were compared with those items found in existing materials evaluation forms. A comparison of grouped responses revealed that only 27 percent of the items on the "materials evaluation" forms might yield data of interest to teachers. It is hardly any wonder that teachers refuse to trouble themselves to provide so much data for others that have so little relevance to themselves.

The characteristics of instructional materials which were identified most frequently as important by teachers interviewed are listed in Table 2. The list is dichotomized and each column contains the twelve characteristics of greatest importance.

These lists were derived in the following manner: First, the teachers were asked to list, separately, those practical and instructional

characteristics of instructional materials which they felt were of most importance to them. Second, they were presented with composite lists of all characteristics and asked to rank them in their order of importance. Each list contained the twelve most frequently mentioned characteristics. It should also be noted that most "materials evaluation" forms solicit teacher responses to most of these items, but they do so, typically, in such an undesirable way that the task of responding proves offensive. This, coupled with requests for a plethora of other information of little or no interest to the teachers, compounds the problem to the point of making the matter intolerable.

Important Considerations

Although existing "materials evaluation" forms really do not determine the value of materials for instructional purposes, and even though teachers dislike responding to "materials evaluation" forms, one must not assume that the reactions of teachers about the instructional materials they use are not valuable and should not be gathered. As consumers, we appreciate and value the judgments, feelings, and opinions of our peers about goods and services that are available to us. What is needed is a data-gathering procedure which has integrity, is palatable to the respondent, and provides for the cycling of the data back to the respondents in a way that is both meaningful and helpful. The following considerations are related to that need.

Teachers' Concerns

Initially, attention should be given to the development of an instrument that reflects teacher concerns. Evaluation specialists need to get out of their isolated bailiwicks and find out what is in the minds of the consumers of instructional materials. It is obvious to the author, at least, that precious little of this has been done.

Instrument Design

There appear to be some obvious characteristics of existing "evaluation" instruments which make them immediately offensive to the respondent. First is length. Multi-page instruments are simply unattractive. Pilot studies by the author suggest that the shorter the instrument, the better; preferably less than one full 8 1/2 x 11 page in length. Secondly, teachers react negatively to instruments that require written responses. If it is at all possible, and there is every reason to believe that it is, the teacher should be able to respond by checking items listed. Allowances should be made for open-ended responses, if the items listed were not adequate. A written response is both physically and mentally tiring, is time-consuming, and is often so ambiguous as to be useless to the evaluator. A third characteristic of instrument design which can "turn teachers off," and which requires careful consideration, is general appearance. A neat, typeset, easy-to-read, easy-to-look-at instrument that is quickly "sized up" by the respondent and seen as non-threatening appears on the basis of initial field testing more likely to be completed and returned by the respondent. In this regard, it was interesting to note that some teachers viewed the "evaluation instrument" in much the same light as they viewed an examination, suggesting that care be taken to make sure that the format of an instrument be designed to avoid its being confused with a test. Lastly, teachers appear to react negatively to instruments that contain numerous items. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that more than 10 or 12 items are too many. While field testing one instrument, for example, every item to which a teacher might have responded was numbered, and totaled 52. When teachers saw the number 52, they tended to grow weary immediately, even though the instrument was no larger than an IBM punch card. The instrument was re-designed, items were grouped into 10 areas and only the areas were numbered (see Figure 1). Under these circumstances, the instrument was much more

Figure 1

MATERIALS USE RESPONSE CARD

(FRONT)

TEACHER: COMPLETE, AND RETURN TO SEIMC WITH THE MATERIALS

1. Number of pupils with whom materials were used _____

2. You are a
___Regular class teacher
___Special class teacher
___Other (please specify) _____

3. With what type of children did you use these materials?
___EMR
___Physically handicapped
___Speech impaired
___Multiply handicapped
___Partially sighted or blind
___Hard of hearing or deaf
___Other (please specify) _____

4. School placement of children using the materials
___Preschool
___Primary
___Intermediate
___Junior high
___Senior high

6. Instructional purpose
___Reading
___Arithmetic (Math)
___Social Studies
___Sciences
___Language Arts
___P.E.
___Music and Art
___Other (please specify)
_____

_____ FOR OFFICE USE ONLY _____

CENTER _____
Name of Material (if necessary specify series and/or level _____
Date sent _____ Date returned _____ Condition upon return: Poor Fair Good Excellent

Figure 1 (Continued)

MATERIALS USE RESPONSE CARD

(BACK)

7. Check the items below which best describe the value of this material for YOUR instructional purposes:

_____ Durable	_____ Practical	_____ Reusable	_____ Instructional	_____ For small group use
_____ Mediocre	_____ Inflexible	_____ Challenging	_____ Inappropriate	
_____ Exciting	_____ Entertaining	_____ Boring	_____ Effective	_____ For individual use
_____ Disorganized	_____ Not relevant	_____ Informative	_____ Unenjoyable	_____ Easy to manage
_____ Attractive	_____ Unclear	_____ Inadequate	_____ Inaccurate	_____ Suitable length
				_____ Interesting to students

8. Would you use this material again? Yes _____ No _____

9. Is this material readily available to you through any source other than the SEIMC? Yes _____ No _____

10. Comments and/or explanations (if you wish) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SEIMC Materials Use Response Card

acceptable, even though the task for the teacher and the size of the instrument, remained exactly the same as before.

Data Collection Procedures

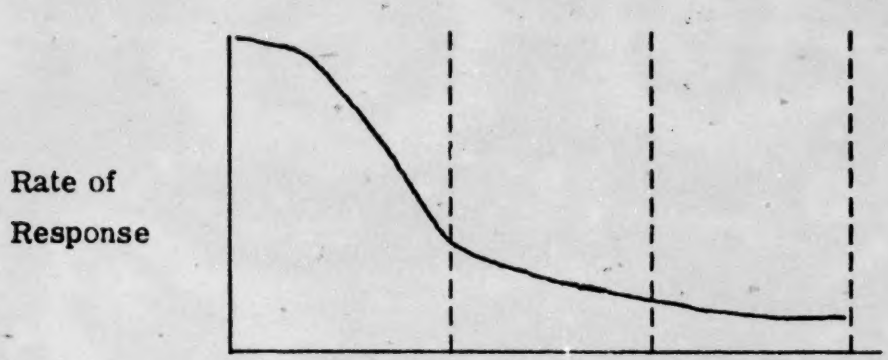
There is probably nothing that can be said with more certainty about teacher reactions to data-gathering instruments than that they loathe the task of repeatedly filling out a form every time they use instructional materials. And yet this is what they are repeatedly asked to do. To deal with this, a simple research procedure is showing promise. Over three randomly selected periods of time during the school year (two weeks, or 10 consecutive school days), one for each nine-week school session, teachers are being asked to complete a Materials Use Response Card on each material they use only during the three selected periods. Under these conditions, they seem to be more willing to cooperate, knowing that they will not have to shoulder this burden indefinitely. It would be assumed that such a procedure would yield less data, but this does not appear to be the case, over the long run. Rather than a lot of data coming in at the time an evaluation procedure is initiated, but then falling off drastically over time, as happens with continuous data-collection procedures, an intermittent data-gathering schedule seems to encourage a higher response rate over short periods of time, as illustrated in Figure 2. Over long periods of time, three to four years, it seems obvious that randomly selected samples of data would yield a pattern of responses that would be highly representative of the population, and would be useful in aiding teachers in the selection of instructional materials.

Feedback to Teachers

As observed earlier, a common complaint of teachers is that their involvement in "materials evaluation" is one-way, and that is away from them. It is proposed, therefore, when teachers are asked to provide data

Figure 2

ILLUSTRATED RESPONSE RATES OVER TIME, USING CONTINUOUS AND INTERMITTENT DATA-GATHERING SCHEDULES



Continuous Data Collection

Intermittent Data Collection

about their experience with instructional materials, that they be assured that their responses, and those of their peers, will be routed back to them in a way that will aid them in their task of selecting appropriate materials for their instructional needs. Certainly, in this day of rapid computerized data analysis, there is no end to the resources available to serious evaluation specialists in the accomplishment of such a task.

Teacher Use of Data

Although teachers express an interest in receiving feedback about peer responses to instructional materials, and although there is reason to suggest that such feedback can be provided in an understandable and cogent way, we are still not sure that once teachers have such data that they can or will use those data to modify their interaction with instructional materials. Little is known about the dynamics involved in the decision-making processes of teachers, and before feedback about instructional materials can be meaningful, it appears that more needs to be known about these processes.

Conclusion

It is a phenomenon that in this era of Naderized consumer protection, at a time when teachers are bombarded as never before with appeals and advertising pitches from scores of publishers to buy their tens of thousands of materials, that so little is said and less is known about the documented instructional worth of products. What we need is a "good schoolkeepers seal of approval" stamped on each instructional material after it has been determined to be field-worthy and psychologically as well as physically safe for students.

APPENDIX B

CLIENT PERCEPTIONS OF LRC SERVICES

LRC _____

Date _____

CLIENT PERCEPTIONS OF LRC SERVICES

A. Demographic Information

1. Name of District_____ 2. Name of School _____

3. City_____, State_____Zip Code_____

4. Check all of the following that apply to you.

_____Regular Class Teacher
_____Special Class Teacher
_____Itinerant/Consulting Teacher
_____Ancillary/Support Teacher
Specify_____

_____Resource Room Teacher
_____College Faculty
_____College Student
_____Other
Specify_____

5. School placement or grade level of your class. Check all that apply.

_____Preschool
_____Primary
_____Intermediate
_____Junior High
_____Senior High
_____Combination
Specify_____
_____Other
Specify_____

6. Type and number of handicapped children with whom you work.

_____EMR
_____TMR
_____L.D.
_____E.D.
_____Physically Handicapped
_____Visually Impaired
_____Auditorially Impaired
_____Multiply Handicapped
_____Speech Impaired
_____Hospitalized/Homebound
_____Other
Specify_____

B. Patron Awareness of Center Services

1. Are you aware of the services available to you through the LRC (ALRC) in your area?

Yes_____ No_____

2. How were the center services brought to your attention? Check all that apply.

_____School administration

_____LRC Personnel

_____Ancillary/Support Personnel

_____Other Teachers

_____Workshops

_____Newsletters

_____Brochures

_____Displays

_____College Courses

_____Other

Specify_____

C. On-Site Assistance

1. How many times this school year has someone from the Center come to your class/school to assist you?

_____If none, why? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Which of the following services were delivered?

_____Materials Demonstration

_____Individual Student Programming

_____Student Assessment

_____Materials Loan

_____Materials Selection

_____Behavior Management and Classroom Control

_____Materials Development

_____Other

Specify_____

_____

3. What are you doing differently in your classroom as a result of this service?

_____

_____

_____

4. To what extent did you find these services useful?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	Very Little	Somewhat	Quite Useful	Very Useful

5. Which service was most useful? _____

_____

Why was it most useful? _____

_____

6. Which service was least useful? _____

_____

Why was it least useful? _____

_____

_____

D. In-Center Assistance

1. How many times this school year have you visited the center? _____

If none, why? _____

_____

2. Which of the following services did you receive at the center?

_____Materials Demonstration

_____Individual Student Programming

_____Student Assessment

_____Materials Loan

_____Materials Selection

_____Behavior Management and Classroom Control

_____Materials Development

_____Other

Specify_____

3. What are you doing differently in your classroom as a result of these services? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. To what extent did you find these services useful?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	Very Little	Somewhat	Quite Useful	Very Useful

5. Which service was most useful? _____

_____

Why was it most useful? _____

_____

6. Which service was least useful? _____

_____

Why was it least useful? _____

_____

_____

E. Materials Loan

1. How many times during this school year have you borrowed materials from the LRC? _____

If none, why? _____

_____

_____

2. Which of the materials you borrowed did you find most useful? If possible, identify them by name.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

3. Which of the materials you borrowed did you find least useful? If possible, identify them by name.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

4. What percent (or how many) of the materials you requested were available to you on the date you wanted them? If necessary, please estimate. If your answer is stated as a percent, so indicate. _____

5. What percent (or how many) of the materials you requested were available to you within 2 weeks of the date you wanted them? If necessary, please estimate. If your answer is stated as a percent, so indicate.

_____

6. What percent (or how many) of the materials you requested were available to you later than two weeks of the date you wanted them? If necessary, please estimate. If your answer is stated as a percent, so indicate.

_____

7. To what extent did you find materials loan services useful?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	Very Little	Somewhat	Quite Useful	Very Useful

If 1, 2, or 3, please explain why. _____

_____

_____

F. Information Services

1. How many requests for information have you made of the LRC this school year (such as information about educational diagnosis, educational prescription, educational programming, media and materials, etc.)? _____

2. What percent (or how many) of these requests did you feel received an adequate response? If stated as a percent, so indicate. _____

3. If the LRC has been unable to fill your requests for information, have you been referred to other agencies or individuals for additional help?

Yes_____ No_____

If yes, where and for what information?

Where	What Information
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. Which of the following informational mailings have you received during this school year?

_____Brochures

_____LRC Newsletter

_____State Newsletter

_____ALRC/RCC Newsletter

_____Other

Specify_____

5. Do you read them? Yes_____ No_____

If No, please explain why not. _____

_____

_____

6. What action have you taken as a result of information received from these mailings?

_____

_____

_____

7. To what extent did you find information services useful?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	Very Little	Somewhat	Quite Useful	Very Useful

If 1, 2, or 3, please explain why. _____

_____

_____

G. In-Service Training

1. What workshops sponsored by the LRC have you attended during this school year?

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

2. What are you doing differently with your students as a result of the knowledge/skills that you acquired from the workshops you attended?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. If you are a student, how have you used the services of the LRC in pursuit of your studies?

_____Evaluating Materials

_____Developing Materials

_____Developing Education Programs

_____Assessing Student Progress

_____Completing Course Assignment

_____Writing Term Papers

_____Borrowing Materials for Use in Student Teaching/Practicum

4. To what extent did you find in-service training services useful?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	Very Little	Somewhat	Quite Useful	Very Useful

If 1, 2, or 3, please explain why._____

_____

_____

H. General Reactions

1. Are the services offered by the LRC available from any other source?

Yes_____ No_____

If yes, where and what services?

Where	What Services
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. If the lack of time, money, and personnel were not problems, what additional services, or changes in existing services, would you want?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

AVAILABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, USE, AND CONDITION OF IMC/LRC ITEMS

Item Sampled	Availability			Accessability		Copyright date	Date last used	Number of Times Used			Condition		
	Available	Checked Out	Lost or Unaccounted For	+	-			This Year	Last Year	Totally	Useable	Parts Missing	Damaged

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Joseph T. Lawton
Assistant Professor
Educational Psychology

Joel R. Levin
Professor
Educational Psychology

L. Joseph Lins
Professor
Institutional Studies

James M. Lipham
Professor
Educational Administration

Donald N. McIsaac
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Educational Administration

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Industrial Engineering

Wayne R. Otto
Professor
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Robert G. Petzold
Professor
Music
Curriculum and Instruction

Thomas S. Popkewitz
Assistant Professor
Curriculum and Instruction

Thomas A. Romberg
Professor
Curriculum and Instruction

Richard A. Rossmiller
Professor
Educational Administration

Dennis W. Spuck
Assistant Professor
Educational Administration

Michael J. Subkoviak
Assistant Professor
Educational Psychology

Richard L. Venezky
Professor
Computer Sciences

J. Fred Weaver
Professor
Curriculum and Instruction

Larry M. Wilder
Assistant Professor
Child Development